



## MARION COUNTY PROSECUTING ATTORNEY

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## **Indianapolis dentist faces charges for Medicaid fraud**

*Dr. Bernice Avant accused of more than \$260,000 in false claims*

(Indianapolis, Ind.) Marion County Prosecutor Terry Curry announced today that charges have been filed against Dr. Bernice Avant, D.D.S., for falsely billing the State of Indiana's Medicaid program for dental treatments she allegedly did not perform on patients. Avant has been charged with one count of Medicaid fraud (C felony) and four counts of theft (D felony). Avant's dentistry practice operates as the Oakbrook Dental Center.

A probable cause affidavit filed in support of the charges alleges Avant, from 2010 to 2013, submitted falsified Medicaid forms to the Indiana Medicaid Program and obtained \$261,909.52 in payment for those claims. Several of the falsified forms reported procedures completed on patients for procedures that were never completed. According to twelve patients interviewed during the investigation, procedures ranging from X-rays to teeth extractions were never performed but indicated as completed on Medicaid billing forms.

"Medicaid fraud preys not only upon state resources, but also on the trust of patients," Prosecutor Terry Curry stated. "It is important that individuals ask for and review receipts for medical services and equipment that they receive to ensure that fraudulent claims or event errors are not occurring."

The Indiana Attorney General's Medicaid Fraud Control Unit (MFCU) investigates fraudulent claims submitted for reimbursement to the Medicaid program and investigates abuse or neglect of patients in institutional settings. An MFCU investigator worked with the Indianapolis Metropolitan Police Department and the Marion County Prosecutor's Office on bringing charges against Avant.

"The allegation here is that this defendant defrauded Medicaid brazenly and repeatedly. This collaboration with Prosecutor Curry brings together our civil effort to protect taxpayers with the pursuit of justice in the criminal system," said Indiana Attorney General Greg Zoeller, whose office operates the MFCU that investigates fraud upon the Indiana Medicaid program.

An initial hearing is expected to be set in criminal court 6.

*A charge of a crime is merely an accusation, and the defendant is presumed innocent until and unless proven guilty.*